

Conf
Pam
#141

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The Guerillas
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It may add to the interest with which the following lines will be read to know that they were composed in a Yankee Bastile. They reach us in manuscript through the courtesy of a lately returned prisoner.

THE GUERRILLAS.

Awake and to horse, my brothers;
For the dawn is glimmering gay,
And hark! in the crackling brushwood
There are feet that tread this way.

"Who cometh?" "A friend!" "What tidings?"
"Oh God! I sicken to tell
For the earth seems earth no longer,
And its sights are the sights of Hell.

"From far off conquered cities,
Comes a voice of stifled wail,
And the shrieks and moans of the houseless
Ring out like a dirge on the gale.

"I've seen from the smoking villiage
Our mothers and daughters fly;
I've seen where the little children
Sank down in the furrows to-die.

"On the banks of the battle-stained river
I stood as the moonlight shone,
And it glared on the face of my brother
As the sad wave swept him on.

"Where my home was glad, are ashes,
And horrors and shame had been there,
For I found on the fallen lintel
This tress of my wife's torn hair.

"They are turning the slaves upon us
And with more than fiends' worst art,
Have uncovered the fire of the Savage
That slept in his untaught heart.

"The ties to our heart that bound him,
They have rent with curses away,
And maddened him with their madness
To be almost as brutal as they.

"With halter and torch and Bible,
And hymns to the sound of the drum,
They preach the Gospel of Murder
And pray for Lust's kingdom to come.

"To saddle! To saddle! My brothers!
Look up to the rising sun,
And ask the God who shines there,
Whether deeds like those shall be done!

"Wherever the vandal cometh,
Press home to his heart with your steel
And when at his bosom you can not,
Like the serpent, go, strike at his heel.

"Through thicket and wood go hunt him,
Creep on to his camp fire side,
And let ten of his corpses blacken
Where one of our brothers hath died.

"In his fainting foot-sore marches,
In his flight from the stricken fray,
In the snare of the lonely ambush
The debts we owe him, pay.

"In God's hand, alone, is vengeance,
But He strikes with the hands of men,
And His blight would wither our manhood
If we smite not the smiter again.

"By the graves where our fathers slumber,
By the shrines where our mothers prayed,
By our homes and hopes and freedom
Let every man swear on his blade,

"That he will not sheath or stay it,
'Till from point to hilt will glow,
With the flush of Almighty vengeance
In the blood of the felon foe."

They swore—and the answering sunlight
Leaped red from their lifted swords,
And the bate of their hearts made echo
To the wrath in their burning words.

There's weeping in all New England,
And by Schuylkill's banks a knell,
And the widows there, and the orphans
How the oath was kept, can tell.

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